

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**


Please amend the Specification by deleting the paragraph identified below and replacing it with the following paragraph. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b), attached at the end of this document is a marked up version of the replacement paragraph showing the amendments.

At page 10, lines 1-25, please replace paragraph 1 with the following paragraph:

To initiate the use of voting booth 24, the voter may insert election key 20 into computing device 12 or a peripheral associated with computing device 12 and may press an appropriate button on a keypad 32 or on a touch sensitive screen 34 connected to computing device 12 or otherwise indicate that the voter is ready to begin. In one embodiment, an election authority may ask the voter to insert into computing device 12 a specially coded compact disc (CD) which serves as election key 20. Insertion notification, a feature of some operating systems and CD readers may then be used to start the voting process. As previously described, computing device 12 may use digital signature 22 to verify that election key 20 is valid. Computing device 12 may then present a screen asking whether the voter would like help screens to assist with the voting process. The voter may choose to proceed through help screens or begin voting immediately without such help screens. Where computing device 12 includes a set of headphones 28, the voter may listen to prerecorded instructions that may have been stored as .wav files or any other appropriate audio files. The ability to provide instructions in an audio format facilitates the voting process for the visually impaired or by others who may not readily understand written text appearing on a computer screen 34. In a particular embodiment, instructions for using the computing device 12 may have information stored in several languages to accommodate voters for whom English may not be easy to understand. The choice of the language can be encoded in the election key 20 or may be selected by the voter. The use of such speech files may also be used to provide remote voting over the telephone. A voter may call into a specified number, be verified using a voice print analysis or any other appropriate technique, and then vote by speaking or pressing a number on the keypad on the telephone in response to the voice messages.

At page 18, lines 3-16, please replace the first full paragraph with the following paragraph:

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Particular embodiments also provide the ability to guide the voter through casting a write-in ballot. Some election jurisdictions do not count write-in votes unless a candidate has properly registered as a write-in candidate. In that case, the voting system 10 may show a box on the screen indicating that write-in votes may be made when a voter has a write-in choice. The voter may be allowed to select "write-in" as a candidate choice using any of the above described methods. Once selected, an instruction may appear explaining that the voter will be able to write the name of the write-in candidate on encoded ballot 36 once produced by ballot generator 30. A space may be created on encoded ballot 36 allowing the voter to add such a name. The fact that there is a write-in candidate on the computer ballot is encoded in ballot 36 to allow for manual processing of the write-in. Alternatively, the voter may be instructed that he should type the name of the write-in candidate on keyboard 32 or otherwise enter the candidate's name. The voter may also or alternatively write-in the name manually.

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